

# Astrologer Presses Case to TBS

Offers novel hypothesis in support

Sparks fly during Q/A session

Janet Sciales, prominent Tampa Bay astrologer and media personality, tenaciously pressed her case to the Tampa Bay Skeptics at its general meeting on October 4.

After Pat Strong and Gary Posner brought the attendees up to date regarding the administrative and financial status of TBS [annual financial summaries will appear in each Summer issue], the floor was given over to Janet.

Referring to astrology as "the world's oldest science" (stressing its original 8000 year relationship to astronomy, from which it branched off 200 years ago), Sciales embarked upon a lengthy historical exposition, beginning with man's first realizations of the cyclical nature of the movements of the sun and the moon, the female menses, the tides, and their apparent interrelationships. The historical narrative touched upon such notables as Pythagoras, Plato, Ptolemy, and Aristarchus, progressing through the dark ages, to Copernicus, Galileo, Tycho Brahe, Kepler, and Newton.

Sciales stated that astrology is observable and measurable, and thus "fits the criteria of a science", although admittedly it is "very, very difficult to measure". And given that the earth has shifted in its relative position to the stars since the zodiac was defined, astrology "has nothing to do with the constellations... those people that equate astrology with the constellations are dead wrong."

She then proposed her own original hypothesis that "the energy from the sun passes through the earth's magnetosphere...(which) transforms the energy to a particular frequency" corresponding to one of the signs of the zodiac. Further, as the sun's energy "passes through the force fields of (the other planets), that energy again is transformed, and reflects back to the earth." The energy responsible for the astrological effect thus "does not originate with" the planets, but "I believe it is reflected sunlight... We astrologers believe at *conception* DNA structure is activated by 'cosmic radiation' (and that) at *birth* the endocrine system gets irradiated by the cosmic energy." Thus, since no two people are conceived and



GUSS WILDER

Janet Sciales addresses TBS meeting on Oct. 4

born at the same precise moment at the same precise location relative to the earth's magnetosphere, each individual is uniquely irradiated. But to account for those born closely enough together in space and time to share identical horoscopes, Sciales postulates that "each being is fired by an individual soul", thus introducing an *immeasurable* variable into a hypothesis that is otherwise *potentially* measurable, should science discover the hitherto unknown astrological force emanating from the sun. She referred to several articles in sources such as Discover magazine which, in her opinion, offer credence to her belief in just such an uncatalogued force, and discussed issues such as twins, "time twins" (people born at the same moment in time, in geographically diverse areas), and clones [feel free to contact her for the references].

In summary, Sciales stated that because it is admittedly a "soft science" and "an art", "in astrology there are no absolutes...there is no way an astrologer can say 'On Tuesday...afternoon...Janet is going to receive a phone call and this is going to be the outcome...' Anyone who makes that claim - terrible, terrible thing to do. You can't do it [or at least] I can't do that...What the astrologer attempts to do is to give a client an understanding of the energy that will be available to that person during a specific period in time...and advises the person the most positive application of that energy. It

(continued on page 5)



**TAMPA BAY SKEPTICS****Statement  
of Purpose**

Tampa Bay Skeptics, Inc. is a non-profit educational and scientific organization devoted to the critical examination of paranormal and fringe-science claims, and the dissemination of factual information about such claims to interested parties throughout the Tampa Bay area and environs. TBS does not reject claims on a priori grounds, but rather is committed to objective and critical inquiry. We share the philosophy of the international Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP), although we are an autonomous local group, with no formal ties to CSICOP.

**TBS REPORT** is published quarterly. We welcome news clippings, and articles and letters for publication (subject to editing), including opposing points of view. As we are non-profit, **stamped, self-addressed return envelopes are requested with all correspondence!**

Views expressed in articles and letters are those of the author, and not necessarily those of the Tampa Bay Skeptics.

**TAMPA BAY SKEPTICS  
REPORT**

Editorial Office:  
6219 Palma Blvd. #210  
St. Petersburg, FL 33715

Editor and Publisher:  
Gary P. Posner

Cartoonist:  
Don Addis

\$10/yr. (4 issues)

(c) 1988  
All rights reserved.  
Press may quote if  
appropriate credit given.

**The Chairman's Corner**

Pat Strong, Ph.D.

Janet Sciales' recent presentation to TBS portrayed astrology to be a "science" rather than a manifestation of the "paranormal". Although there is no doubt in my mind as to her sincerity and conviction in this regard, just how persuasive a case did she make?

One alleged evidence of astrology's scientific and professional standing is the observation that so many customers are satisfied, and return time and again for readings. Yet, if the consumer's satisfaction is held to be a validation, similar validations would apply to the work of psychics, faith-healers, voodoo priests, and the like. The book "When Prophecy Fails" clearly illustrates that when confronted with a factual outcome which is contrary to a person's pre-conceived beliefs, often the evidence is ignored, and may actually serve to *strengthen* the belief.

Sciales repeatedly referred to the "electromagnetic" energy of the sun, planets, and earth, interacting to create the astrological force. However, the magnetic fields of the sun and planets are relatively fixed, and do not flow from one body to another. As far as I know, a magnetic field may affect the direction of energy flow, but I know of no transformation of energy caused by these fields. It would appear that some unknown force must be at work.

In addition to distance considerations, this hypothesized force also appears immune to attenuation from passage through solid objects such as steel girders. For example, it seems to matter not whether one is conceived or born outdoors, in a small suburban hospital, or in a large urban hospital. One would think that such structures should significantly attenuate the effect of the energy upon the brain. This unknown energy, until it is discovered, sounds suspiciously akin to the hypothesized thought waves of ESP.

Assuming, however, that such energy does exist, it would seem that in the daytime, the amount of this energy impinging on the earth *directly* from the sun would be millions of times stronger than that being reflected from the planets, which would be relatively trivial. And at night, much more energy is striking the earth from the myriad of stars in our galaxy and the other galaxies (containing a much broader spectrum of radiant energy), as compared to the amount of solar energy being reflected to earth from our neighboring planets.

Another point of difficulty is the hypothesized effect of the astrological energy at the moment of conception. This effect is presented as highly significant, as it is the mechanism whereby DNA mutations (with their ultimate predictable [by astrologers] impact on personality, etc.) are induced. Yet, although great pains are taken by astrologers to determine the precise moment of birth, no such data is generally available as to the precise moment of conception. And while it is true that various forms of energy can induce DNA mutations, to affect the whole organism, this energy would have to alter the specific sperm that fertilizes the egg, or the egg itself, or both. It is not clear why this energy has not already impacted the parents' germinal tissues continually *prior* to conception, while still in the ovary or testis. Similarly, the question arises as to why the energy would have a special effect on the endocrine system at the moment of birth, as opposed to some time prior to and/or after birth.

(continued on page 8)



## How I Spent My UFO Encounter Weekend

by John Doherty

I paid my \$10 (or rather TBS', thank you very much), put on my stick-on name tag, and quickly found a seat with a group of people viewing a highly dramatized commercial film about the Bermuda Triangle and related matters. We learned of disappearances of aircraft, ships, and even a continent (Atlantis), the pursuit of flying saucers by an F-51 Mustang fighter out of Godman AFB, Kentucky, in 1952, and were treated to

Be on board for

**UFO ENCOUNTER WEEKEND**  
Nov. 5th, 6th, Sat & Sun. 3-9 p.m.  
\$10.00 per day

Watch  
Channel 8, 8-9p.m.  
Oct 5th  
"Unsolved Mysteries"  
Channel 13, 8-10p.m.  
Oct 14th  
"U.F.O. - Government Coverups"

Don't miss this chance to see and hear about the startling cases of alien abductions revealed in the past few years

3 hrs of U.F.O. films  
Speakers  
Books, Magazines  
U.F.O. & other related Products

Rodeway Inn  
Highway 19S &  
Gulf to Bay

- \* ET's do exist, why are they here?
- \* What has happened to all the missing craft & people on Earth?
- \* Why has the U.S. Gov't kept the truth from us?
- \* How long have the U.F.O.'s affected the Earth & it's people?

After 40 years of Government & Military cover-ups, the truth is now revealed  
U.F.O.'s are REAL, and We are NOT Alone!

Don't miss this Informative & Enlightening Weekend  
Presented by U.F.O. Group Awareness

Soup & Salad Bar available 5-9p.m. Call 786-3126 For more information

the spectacle of a brilliantly lighted UFO reportedly witnessed by thousands (including chickens, horses, and sheep) in Puerto Rico in 1972.

The narrator dramatically asks, "Where are they coming from?" Suggested origins included 1) other worlds, 2) this world (under the sea), and 3) someplace else (time warps, other dimensions, etc.). Not much left.

I counted close to 40 attendees, most of whom appeared to be quite ordinary, middle aged people, fairly evenly split between the sexes. Or maybe they were very cleverly disguised aliens.

At the conclusion of the film, I perused the literature on the tables, most of which dealt with UFOs. Displayed on the wall were a number of news clippings, many from unimpeachable sources such as the National Enquirer.

Available for only \$30 each were gold-plated wire pyramids. Assuming the instructions to be scientifically accurate, placing this device on your head would bring into balance your inner magnetic field (think of the havoc wrought by an *unbalanced* inner magnetic field!).

Much of the conversation of the attendees centered upon the massive U.S. government cover-up relative to UFOs. The consensus feeling was that this conspiracy is intended to protect the public from a truth too startling for us to handle, one which, if known, would result in global economic disaster, loss of traditional religious faith, and a general malaise among the population.

All seemed to agree that somewhere between four and twenty UFOs have crashed in the U.S. I dared to mention that if this is indeed the case, surely dozens more must have crashed in many other countries around the world. Does the U.S. government conspiracy include a world-wide monopoly on crashed saucer data?

I was left with the feeling that the true believers in UFOs are fervently awaiting the alien messiah, who will then take the faithful by the hand and lead them to a heavenly new home.

I was uncomfortable with these UFO buffs; their thought processes, and conclusions reached, are so alien to my own.

No doubt about it --- Humpty Dumpty was pushed!

[Thanks to Jim Ogden for alerting us to the meeting]



### TAMPA BAY SKEPTICS EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIRMAN: Paschal N. Strong, Ph.D. (Professor of Psychology, University of South Florida, Tampa)

VICE-CHAIR: Miles W. Hardy, Ph.D. (Professor of Psychology, University of South Florida, Tampa)

SECRETARY: Jerry L. Touchton, Brandon (Physics Teacher, Tampa Preparatory School)

TREASURER: Gary P. Posner, M.D., St. Petersburg (Free Inquiry Faith-healing Investigation Project; CSICOP UFO Subcommittee)

AT LARGE: James W. Lett, Ph.D. (Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Indian River Community College, Fort Pierce)

AT LARGE: Charles R. Mathews, M.D. (Medical Director, Sarasota Memorial Hospital)

COUNSEL: Terry A. Smiljanich, J.D., St. Petersburg (Blasingame, Forizs & Smiljanich, P.A.)



## SNIPPETS

Five papers presented on August 14 at the American Psychological Association conference in Atlanta endorsed the notion that "The people with the best mental health are those whose view of the world and of themselves is distorted. Evidence is mounting that rose-colored glasses can improve physical health..."

(St. Pete. Times, August 15)

Soviet chess star Viktor Korchnoi claims to be playing a longstanding match against a Hungarian grandmaster who died 37 years ago. "I believe in life after death."

(St. Pete. Times, October 6)

Jackie Gleason's estate included 3,700 books, 1700 of which dealt with subjects such as UFOs, parapsychology, and the occult. His collection has been donated to the University of Miami library. "Some of these books are kind of crackpot", according to the librarian.

(St. Pete. Times, October 7)

"The Science Report Card" issued by the Educational Testing Service of Princeton, N.J. notes that America's schoolchildren's science proficiency is "alarming and depressing", with more than half unable to perform work requiring only basic technical understanding.

(AP/St. Pete. Times, September 23)



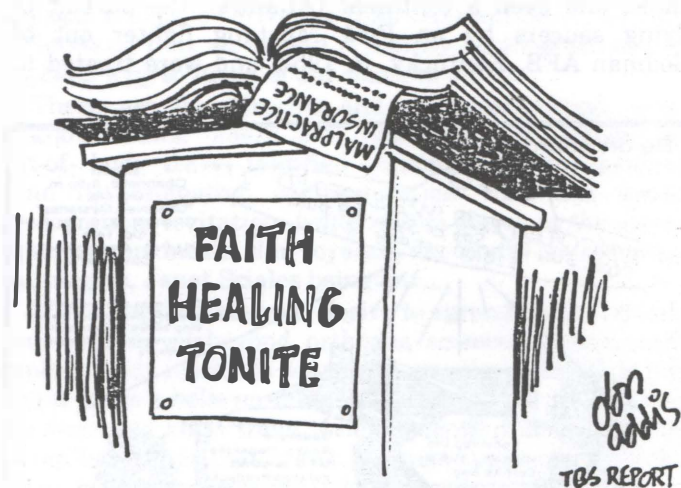
Originally appeared in St. Petersburg Times

Sir Alfred J. Ayer, English philosopher and renowned atheist, had his disbelief in an afterlife weakened "slightly" (although not his disbelief in God), following his successful resuscitation from a choking accident. While he lay pulseless for four minutes, "I was confronted by a red light...I was aware that this light was responsible for the government of the universe. Among its ministers were two creatures who had been put in charge of space..."

(L.A. Times/St. Pete. Times, October 9)

A Sacramento woman's conviction for the death of her daughter from meningitis, the result of the Christian Science practice of withholding of medical care, has been unanimously upheld by the California Supreme Court. About a dozen similar cases are now pending around the country.

(St. Pete. Times, November 11)



In a survey performed for the National Science Foundation, only 79% of Americans answered correctly when asked if the earth revolves around the sun (rather than vice versa)! Of those who managed to guess the right answer to that toughie, only 45% knew that the orbit took a year, as opposed to a day (17%) or a month (2%). Another 9% found this follow-up question too tricky to even venture a guess.

(St. Pete. Times, October 24)

At the urging of his defense attorney, a Colorado man convicted for the fifth time of drunken driving received, as part of his sentence, a judge's order that he undergo acupuncture treatment. "I'm not sure that acupuncture works", Judge Thomas Reed told the defendant, "but it's obvious nothing else works with you."

(St. Pete. Times, October 23)

Actress Shirley MacLaine believes that her views on past lives are becoming more accepted. "I don't think the word 'kook' comes into it anymore..."

(AP/St. Pete. Times, October 13)

"Maybe Cher was right. Maybe you are an a\_\_\_\_\_." (Shirley MacLaine to TV interviewer David Letterman)

(Newsweek, October 17)

[ Please send your Snippets to the editor at TBS REPORT ]



("Astrologer Presses Case..." continued from page 1)

is entirely up to the client to make their future happen by the actions you take..."

Regarding the primary reason for Janet's invitation to address the membership of TBS [Note: she is a dues-paying member of TBS, sharing our general philosophy, except as regards astrology], she stated that "I believe that studies can be done. I have not been able to come up on my own with a test to prove the validity of astrology that would be acceptable to you...and to me. Sun sign astrology [i.e. newspaper horoscopes] is bogus...I am looking very much for *your* input on acceptable tests - what we can do."

The Q/A session that followed generated several rounds of sparks from Sciales, as her fundamental premises were questioned. For example, questioners remarked that: (a) the amount of electromagnetic energy being radiated from the lights in the delivery room far exceeds the amount of solar energy radiating into that enclosed room; (b) the amount of energy being reflected to earth from any given planet is negligible, compared to the totality of energy bombarding the earth (Sciales disagreed); (c) an astrologer, instead of insisting upon the birthdate in advance, ought to be able to interview a test subject at length, and correctly determine when the subject was born (Sciales protested that this is akin to a doctor performing surgery first, and running tests to make the diagnosis later; (d) Sciales' talent may be unrelated to the heavens, but simply a brand of clinical psychology (she disagreed); (e) studies (e.g. *Nature*, 12/5/85) have demonstrated that astrologers succeed at rates no greater than chance when tested for their ability to correlate personality test results with birthdates (Sciales and a colleague challenged the studies' validity).

But when specifically asked if she should be able to "do a better than chance match", given a number of pre-interpreted psychological test results, and the birth information of the subjects, she said, "If I'm (given) a stack of psychological studies (and) have exact astrological (birth) information...then I should think I would be able to do that..."

A questioner noted that if Janet's theory is correct, the moment of conception, with its DNA mutations, is far more important than the moment of birth. In response, Sciales complained that astrologers simply don't have the conception data to work with, and in fact often make do with *poor birth data* (doctors are too busy to record the exact moment of delivery, standardized time only came into being in the U.S. in 1956, etc.). She stated that "getting accurate birth data...has been the bane of astrologers forever...(which) makes it very, very difficult to conduct valid studies...Accuracy of birth information is notoriously unreliable..." The indisputable fact that astrology nevertheless has managed to "work" so well (i.e. satisfy its customers) cannot help but contribute to the skepticism that a *scientific* mechanism is responsible for its successes. [Note: Tampa Tribune covered meeting and Q/A session on Oct. 6, page 3-F]

-G.P.

## Humanistic Judaism Leader to Visit Tampa

Sherwin Wine, founder and president of the North American Committee for Humanism, founder of the humanistic Judaism movement, and author of Judaism Beyond God, will speak on **Sunday, January 15** at the Jewish Community Center, 2808 Horatio Avenue, Tampa. Light lunch at 1:30 P.M. to precede speech. For more information call 962-0738 (Tampa).

## TBS Media Requests

Two Florida television stations have contacted TBS since our last issue, for assistance in preparing features dealing with the paranormal. Janet Alshouse (WTVJ/Miami) received articles and a videotape, for her piece on UFOs and associated abduction reports. Bob Sakolder (sp?) (Ch.6/Orlando) was referred to several members in his area, for information about local reports of ghosts. Executive Council member Jim Lett reports that he has been interviewed by several local (east coast) newspapers relative to his course "Anthropology and the Paranormal".

## Graphology Information Requested

Surreptitious handwriting analysis apparently is replacing the voice stress analyzer and the polygraph as a vehicle for employers to screen potential job applicants. CSICOP is very interested in any information that anyone may have about this abuse of "graphology". Please forward any material on the subject to TBS, or directly to CSICOP.

## Follow-up

Tampa astronomy professor (and TBS member) Jack Robinson is actively investigating the Gulf Breeze UFO photo case (see p. 3 last issue), and hopes to be able to write an article for the *Skeptical Inquirer*. Further details will be forthcoming if and when his investigation is completed.

## Lost to Follow-up

Judy Ciarcia, the Sarasota Herald-Tribune reporter who was working in cooperation with TBS to investigate local psychic surgery claims (see p. 1 last issue), has married and left the Sarasota area.

Rhody Parker, whose Tampa cable TV program was to have featured further appearances by members of TBS (see p. 8 last issue), no longer has his show.



## Look Ma! No Pimples!

As is evident, *TBS REPORT* is now published on a laser printer, greatly improving its attractiveness and readability.

Special thanks to Mike Street and Gabriel Begue of **MicroComputer Systems, Inc.**, Tampa, for their patient and generous assistance in ironing out our printer problems.

## CSICOP is Coming to Town (Maybe)

The Executive Council of CSICOP *tentatively* plans to fly to Tampa for its April meeting. A press conference and evening dinner (for TBS members) would follow. Most activities are scheduled to take place on Saturday, April 22. Further details will appear in the next issue, but you may wish to mark your calendar now.

\* \* \* \* \*

For those of you unfamiliar with CSICOP, or with other national/international sources of skeptical information on the paranormal, please be made aware of the following:

- 1) *The Skeptical Inquirer* - critically-acclaimed flagship journal of CSICOP.  
Box 229/Buffalo, N.Y. 14215
- 2) *Free Inquiry* - leading secular humanist journal.  
Box 5/Buffalo, N.Y. 14215
- 3) *Prometheus Books* - leading publisher of skeptical works. 35-page catalogue.  
700 East Amherst Street/Buffalo, N.Y. 14215

CSICOP has just published a new booklet entitled "**What is CSICOP?**", which they say includes "everything you ever wanted to know" about the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal. Its 20 8 1/2 x 11 pages cover CSICOP's history, Executive Council, Policy on Sponsoring Research, its Fellows, consultants, staff, subcommittees, and more. It is an invaluable guide, and is available from CSICOP (address above) for \$5.00 (cost includes postage).

Note: CSICOP will make available to TBS back issues of *The Skeptical Inquirer*, its *Index*, and volume binders at a discount, for sale at our meetings. If you wish to order a particular item, either for purchase at our next meeting, or by mail from us prior, please let TBS order it for you. Upon arrival of your order, be prepared to remit a check (for 85% of retail price, plus CSICOP's postage/handling fee) payable to Tampa Bay Skeptics.

("READERS' FORUM" continued from page 7)

reality. The government has gone to great pains to conceal the facts on UFOs. I've seen a book documenting many Navy sightings...Science has been proven wrong on its most basic assumptions on the nature of reality...Although I consider Ayn Rand my best teacher, when I discovered her error regarding how we know what we know, I realized that she had neglected the inner senses that correspond to the five outer senses...When you realize that the new physics demonstrates that reality is consciousness, and that physical reality is derivative from consciousness, you can understand that we've had it exactly backwards, which explains why so many of our sciences aren't.

There are no miracles and no supernatural, only unknown laws. There are, however, such things as out-of-body travel (verified personally by my having done it), telepathy, communication with the dead, precognition, levitation, being in two places at the same time, psychokinesis, clairvoyance, etc. There are talented astrologers, Janet Sciales being one...

While I appreciate your desire to spread truth, I think you have to go beyond orthodox science's limits, and explore with intent to learn the mystical discipline. It might make a believer out of you as it did me. They have the laws and know them, where science does not. Many are called frauds that aren't, because they can't perform with too much negative vibrations and skepticism...I expect when the dust settles, we will see a merging of science and mysticism...

Jean Eaton, Tampa

*Editor's Reply: TBS is concerned with testable claims of what we call the paranormal, or what you refer to as "unknown laws". We are not attempting to tell people what to believe, but do insist that such claims be proven. Your own list contains a number of easily testable claims, none of which has yet withstood the critical scrutiny of skeptical investigators.*

**Notes:** All letters are subject to editing for purposes of clarity, length and taste.

A number of members have written to request that meetings not be held on certain days of the week which they find to be inconvenient. We shall attempt to vary the days on which our meetings are scheduled.

## Directions to TBS meeting (see p. 8):

Tampa Central Library is only a block off the I-275 Tampa St./Ashley St. exit ramp. Take center route when ramp forks into three at end. Library is first building beyond Barnett Bank on right. Free parking on side streets (if allowed), or use garage (first building beyond library). Meeting will end promptly at 8:45, when auditorium must be vacated. Garage has 2nd level covered walkway to library.

## READERS' FORUM

Editor:

The enclosed material [about the UFO Encounter Weekend (see p. 3) and other matters] appear to be proper fodder for TBS. I picked them up at WTKN Radio.

The October program was fascinating, although I thought the point of inviting Ms. Sciales was to emphasize the possibility of interesting research. Her lecture on Johannes Kepler and such was garden club stuff.

I appreciate your work.

Jim Ogden, St. Petersburg

Editor:

It pays to be a skeptic, and not just about the paranormal. Fourteen years ago, a friend of mine offered to sell me a piece of property in Florida for a very reasonable price. Kidding, I asked, "What's the matter? Is it under water?" It has been a standing joke for some time that, when someone seems to naively accept a proposition, he is told, "If you believe that, I have some swampland in Florida..."

My friend assured me that this was not the case. But, being a skeptic, and knowing that I wanted to retire in Florida, I gave him only a small deposit, and travelled down here to inspect the property. It was O.K., on a slight rise, with a water table down to about 12 feet, and was located in a desirable area. I paid my friend the balance, and I've now lived here for 12 years in a house I built, and have never had any problem with flooding.

Developers have been selling naive northerners filled-in swampland for years. Before buying property in Florida, check it out! If the water table is only 2 or 3 feet down in the dry season, you may be in for big trouble. Developers will put about a foot of fill in low land, and dig a drainage ditch. If you see a drainage ditch near

your property, you have to wonder, "Why was it necessary?" If there are some nice cypress trees growing in your back yard, BEWARE!

In long dry spells, even swampland looks good. But come a week of heavy rain, as we have from time to time, you might need a boat to get to your home. Study the scenes of this type of flooding on TV, and before buying any property in Florida, "BE A LITTLE SKEPTICAL".

Lou Allsopp, Hudson

Editor:

I recently spoke with my dentist about TBS, and he seemed very interested in knowing more about the group. He sounded particularly interested in the "psychic dentist" article (Vol. 1 No. 1).

Please send a newsletter to him. I feel that it would be valuable to have another medical professional as part of our organization.

I am also trying to get several friends and acquaintances to attend the upcoming meeting.

Mike Smolik, St. Petersburg

*Editor's Reply: We sent a newsletter to your dentist, but he has not yet elected to join our ranks. Ditto re: my own dentist.*

Editor:

I was intrigued to read in the Tampa Tribune (July 30) that you have actually gotten together a group to attempt to convince people not to believe in astrology or ESP, and that the supernatural has no basis in

*(continued on page 6)*

### TAMPA BAY SKEPTICS MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION/BACK ORDER FORM

- ☐ YES, I wish to support the Tampa Bay Skeptics in its efforts to examine and report upon fringe-science and paranormal claims. Enclosed is my check for \$10. Please enroll me as a member of TBS, and begin my annual subscription to *TBS REPORT* with issue \_\_\_\_\_.
- ☐ Please list me as a subscriber only, beginning with issue \_\_\_\_\_. Enclosed is my check for \$10.
- ☐ Please send back issues of \_\_\_\_\_ (@ \$2.50 per) (Vol. 1 No.1 gratis) [May be available as photocopies only]

Please make check payable to Tampa Bay Skeptics, and mail to:

Tampa Bay Skeptics  
6219 Palma Blvd. #210  
St. Petersburg, FL 33715





## TAMPA BAY SKEPTICS GENERAL MEETING

**SCHEDULED: "Open forum"**

**Will include tape of recent "Good Morning America"  
test of astrologer Joyce Jillson**

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 26 -- 7:00- 8:45 P.M.**

**AUDITORIUM, CENTRAL LIBRARY**

**900 N. ASHLEY ST., TAMPA**

**(See directions on page 6)**

**General public welcome**

*("CHAIRMAN'S CORNER" continued from page 2)*

The discussion of twins raises a critical issue. Research shows that fraternal twins tend to be no more alike in their behavioral characteristics (introversion vs. extroversion, etc.) than are siblings born at entirely different times. As regards so-called "time twins", for every list of coincidences of life experiences shared by people born at approximately the same moment in time, probably many more "time twins" could be found who share few or no such common experiences.

As regards an astrologer's private practice, one gifted in interpersonal skills may serve as a useful medium through which a client, often predisposed toward belief, can explore and resolve a problem. Yet, astrology need not be *real* in order to be effective (see *Skeptical Inquirer* Vol. 11, No. 2&3).

Ms. Sciales indicated that she had been unsuccessful in the past in enlisting the aid of scientists to help her

prove her theory as to the mechanisms through which astrology functions. I would point out that other sciences have taken the time and effort to put their disciplines on a sound scientific basis, accumulating statistically significant results, subjecting their data to critical peer review, public scrutiny, and replicability studies, while constantly revising their theories as empirical data warrant. Astrology, in common with the paranormal disciplines, has not historically followed this path.

I should also note that Janet mentioned the problem of astrologers who are not qualified. If astrology wishes to be considered a profession, certain criteria must be met. The profession must be based upon an accepted body of knowledge which is constantly being updated. It must determine a specific type of educational experience necessary for obtaining this knowledge. It must determine standards to be met, and methods of testing, through the use of examinations of some type, to assess the practitioner's degree of knowledge. And it must have a professional organization which polices itself. To my knowledge, astrology meets none of these criteria.

In the intervening weeks since our last TBS general meeting, I have contacted Janet's office on at least three occasions, in order to arrange a meeting for the purpose of exploring possible objective testing of her abilities as an astrologer. We finally scheduled a meeting for December 12, but she called and cancelled. I hope to be able to arrange such a meeting for January. Stay tuned.

### - - - TBS UPDATE SERVICE - - -

If you would like to be kept more closely informed of TBS' activities (and other relevant community/media events) than a quarterly newsletter allows, send us a stamped, self-addressed envelope with "TBS Update Service" printed in the lower left corner. As events warrant, notices will be sent to all interested parties. Upon receipt, if you wish to remain on the service, please send another stamped return envelope.



6219 Palma Boulevard #210  
St. Petersburg, Florida 33715

**FIRST CLASS MAIL**